

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 3 ABU DHABI 1746

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PDEV, SOPN, EFIN, TC
SUBJECT: SHAIKH RASHID AIRS STILL MORE GRIEVANCES

REF: ABU DHABI 1621 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: BEIRUT WEEKLY AL-HAWADESS CARRIES REPORT ON
UAE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DISPUTES CERTAIN TO INTENSIFY
EXISTING STRAINS IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERS IN ABU
DHABI AND DUBAI. ARTICLE AIRS NUMBER OF DUBAI GRIEVANCES
WITH FEDERAL AND ABU DHABI EMIRATE OFFICIALS INCLUDING
NOT ONLY WELL-KNOWN COMPLAINT ABOUT CONSTITUTIONALITY OF
FEDRUARY 1 MILITARY REORGANIZATION BUT ALSO ABOUT
ABROGATION OF TRANSIT VISAS, ABU DHABI DEMAND THAT OIL
FIELD SUPPLY COMPANIES MOVE THEIR HEADQUARTERS FROM DUBAI
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TO THIS EMIRATE, NEW RESTRICTIONS ON RIGHT OF SPONSORSHIP
OF BUSINESS IN ABU DHABI PURPORTED ATTACKS ON DUAI BY UAE
GOVERNMENT PRESS, EFFORTS BY FEDERAL INFORMATION MINI-
STRY TO CURTAIL BROADCASTING AND NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING IN
DUBAI, AND ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DUBAI IN DIS-
BURSEMENTS FROM FEDERAL BUDGET. ARTICLE CONTAINS NUMBER
OF DIRECT QUOTES FROM SHAIKH RASHID, MIN DEF SHAIKH MUHAMMAD,

AND RASHID ADVISER MAHDI TAJIR, ALL OF WHOM EXCULPATE UAE PRESIDENT/ABU DHABI RULER SHAIKH ZAYID OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE PROBLEMS BUT POINT FINGERS OF ACCUSATION AT THOSE AROUND ZAYID INCLUDING MINPET MANA SAID AL-UTAYBA. THIS IS SECOND TIME THIS MONTH RASHID HAS SPOKEN OUT ON INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND SOME PUBLIC RESPONSE FROM ZAYID MAY NOW BE FORTHCOMING. END SUMMARY.

2. THROUGH LOCAL CONTACT OF EMBASSY'S OIC DUBAI WE HAVE OBTAINED COPY OF JUNE 16 ISSUE OF BEIRUT WEEKLY AL-HAWADESS WHICH DEVOTES ITS COVER STORY BY JILAL KISHK TO BARING NUMBER OF DUBAI GRIEVANCES AGAINST FEDERAL AND ABU DHABI

AUTHORITIES. (SOURCES SAID CENSORS BLOCKING DISTRIBUTION THIS ISSUE IN DUBAI.) KISHK FIRST DISPOSES OF SEVERAL CANARDS, INCLUDING RUMORS OF PLANS TO REVIVE AN INDEPENDENT QASSIMI STATE IN THE NORTHERN EMIRATES, THAT DUBAI WILL SECEDE AND JOIN OMAN, AND THAT RAS AL-KHAIMAH HAS ACCEPTED SOVIET EXPERTS. NEVERTHELESS, HE EMPHASIZES THAT ALL IS NOT PLACID IN THE UAE.

3. KISHK APPARENTLY INTERVIEWED DUBAI RULER/FEDERATION VICE PRESIDENT SHAIKH RASHID, HIS SON MIN DEF SHAIKH MUHAMMAD, AND RASHID'S CLOSE ADVISER MAHDI TAJIR. EVERYONE HE MET, KISHK SAYS, REAFFIRMED THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE UNION AND THEIR CONFIDENCE IN ZAYID'S LEADERSHIP. AT SAME TIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DUBAIANS ARGUED THAT ZAYID IS SURROUNDED BY UNWISE IF NOT MISCHIEVOUS ADVISERS WHOM THEY BLAME FOR CREATING CURRENT TENSIONS BETWEEN THE RULERS. DUBAIANS HAD THEREFORE AGREED TO SPEAK TO AL-HAWADESS IN BID TO BRING THEIR COMPLAINTS DIRECTLY TO ATTENTION OF SHAIKH ZAYID. HE QUOTES RASHID AS STATING THAT: "THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ZAYID AND MYSELF...ALL THE PROBLEMS ARE CREATED BY HANGERS-ON WHO RAISE DIFFICULTIES IN THEIR DESIRE TO TURN THE FEDERATION INTO A CORPORATE STATE. ZAYID HAS MORE THAN ONCE GIVEN ORDERS TO FOLLOW MY ADVICE; THEY THEN CONSIDER IT THE ORDER) BUT DO NOT DO IT." TAJIR REVEALED THAT MORE THAN ONCE ZAYID HAD OFFERED UAE PRESIDENCY TO RASHID WHO HAD DECLINED, AFFIRMING THAT ONLY ZAYID WAS QUALIFIED TO HOLD THAT POST. (COMMENT: THIS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED TO US BY ZAYID HIMSELF.)

4. ARTICLE NEXT REVIEWS IN FAMILIAR TERMS DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO RULERS OVER ZAYID'S FEBRUARY 1 REORGANIZATION OF UAE ARMED FORCES AND APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON SULTAN TO BE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. HOWEVER, KISHK SUGGESTS ON PRINCIPAL REASON FOR DISAGREEMENT IS THAT RASHID'S OWN SON AHMAD, COMMANDER OF CENTRAL MILITARY REGION (I.E.,

DUBAI), COVETED THAT POST AND THAT HE AND MIN DEF MUHAMMAD BIN RASHID PRESSED THEIR FATHER TO PRESERVE "THEIR RIGHTS" ARTICLE ALSO ALLEGES THAT ZAYID WAS MOTIVATED TO EFFECT REORGANIZATION WHEN INFORMED BY ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF AWWAD AL-KHALDI THAT HE UNABLE TO DIRECT THE FORCES BECAUSE MIN DEF INSISTED UPON REFERRING ALL DECISIONS TO HIS FATHER SHAIKH RASHID. KISHK REPORTS THAT DUBAI OBJECTIONS ARE NOT TO PERSONALITY OR FITNESS OF SULTAN BIN ZAYID TO COMMAND ARMED FORCES BUT TO UNCONSTITUTIONAL MANNER IN WHICH HIS APPOINTMENT WAS ACCOMPLISHED.

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5. ARTICLE REHASHES DUBAI UNHAPPINESS OVER ABROGATION OF TRANSIT VISAS (SINCE RESTORED), WHICH DUBAIANS CLAIMED HARMED THEIR MERCANTILE INTERESTS, WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION.

6. IN SOME LENGTH AND WITH ACCOMPANYING PHOTOGRAPHS OF ARABIC AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE DOCUMENTS, ARTICLE SETS FORTH DUBAI OBJECTIONS TO RECENT MOVES BY ABU DHABI PETROLEUM DEPARTMENT TO COMPEL ALL OIL FIELD SUPPLY AND SERVICE COMPANIES SERVING ABU DHABI TO ESTABLISH THEIR HEADQUARTERS AND FACILITIES WITHIN ABU DHABI. INTERESTINGLY, ARTICLE QUOTES UNNAMED DUBAI SOURCE WHO ALLEGED THAT WHEN PRESSED

FOR EXPLANATION OF THIS MOVE, MANA SAID AL-UTAYBA CLAIMED HE HAD OPPOSED THIS DECISION WHICH HE SAID WAS IMPOSED ON HIM BY ABU DHABI EMIRATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. TWENTY COMPANIES OPERATING IN DUBAI HAVE ALLEGEDLY RESPONDED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABU DHABI ULTIMATUM. NOTING IMPACT THIS WILL HAVE ON DUBAI'S OWN DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR JEBAL ALI INDUSTRIAL AREA, KISHK STATES DUBAIANS ARE COMPARING ABU DHABI'S ACTION WITH ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL.

7. KISHK QUOTES MAHDI TAJIR AS HOLDING UTAYBA RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER ABU DHABI ORDER THAT RESIDENTS OF SIX OTHER EMIRATES IN UAE WORKING OR DOING BUSINESS IN ABU DHABI MUST NOW OBTAIN AN ABU DHABI SPONSOR. TAJIR CLAIMS THAT ACTION TAKEN WITHOUT ZAYID'S KNOWLEDGE AND IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AS IT SHOULD ALSO HAVE RECEIVED RASHID'S APPROVAL AS VICE PRESIDENT SINCE IT RESTRICTS FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITAL AND LABOR WITHIN THE FEDERATION. TAJIR ASSERTED THAT IN FUTURE MINISTERS WHO MAKE SUCH "MISTAKES" SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO RESIGN AND INDICATED THAT DUBAI WOULD NO LONGER REMAIN SILENT WHEN SUCH MISTAKES WERE COMMITTED. HE ADDED THAT ABU DHABI ACTION IF ALLOWED TO STAND WOULD LEAD TO CONCENTRATION OF ECONOMIC POWER IN HANDS OF SMALL GROUP OF MONOPOLISTS AND WOULD BE INJURIOUS TO UAE ECONOMY WHICH THRIVES ON KEEPING OPEN DOOR TO TRADE AND FOREIGN BUSINESS. TAJIR BY THE WAY DENIED THAT DUBAI ALSOQUALITY OF SUCH PRACTICES BY THREATENING TO BOYCOTT CARRIERS USING NEW SHARJAH AIR AND SEA PORTS AND FORBIDDING TAXIS REGISTERED IN SHARJAH TO ENTER DUBAI.

8. FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ALSO CRITICIZED BY DUBAIANS FOR ALLEGEDLY REQUESTING INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION TO REVOKE BROADCASTING FREQUENCIES GRANTED DUBAI BROADCASTING SERVICE (A MOVE DUBAI ABLE TO COUNTER ONLY WITH SOME DIFFICULTY), FOR FEEDING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WITH FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT DUBAI, AND FOR ENCOURAGING PERSONAL ATTACKS IN OFFICIAL PRESS ON RASHID. DUBAIANS COMPLAINED ESPECIALLY OF LONG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND UNEXPLAINED DELAY BY MINSTER OF INFORMATION IN GRANTING LICENSE TO NEW ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY KHALEEJ TIMES EVEN AFTER RASHID HAD AUTHORIZED PAPER TO BE PUBLISHED IN DUBAI. TAJIR QUOTED AS ACKNOWLEDGING RASHID HAD VIOLATED LAW IN ALLOWING PAPER TO BEGIN PUBLICATION WITHOUT

FEDERAL LICENSING BUT DEFENDED THIS MOVE ON GROUNDS OF
INFORMATION MINISTER'S INACTION. TAJIR BLAMED MINISTER,
NOT ZAYID, FOR THIS.

9. KISHK FURTHER MAKES REFERENCE TO DUBAI ALLEGATIONS THAT
DUBAIS IN FEDERAL POSTS BELOW CABINET LEVEL ARE BEING
REMOVED AND NOT REPLACED IN APPARENT MOVE TO REDUCE THAT
EMIRATE'S INFLUENCE.

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FINAL SECTION OF 3 ABU DHABI 1746

10. VEXED QUESTION OF DUBAI CONTRIBUTIONS TO FEDERAL
BUDGET ALSO COVERED WITH DUBAIANS REITERATING CLAIM THAT
LAST YEAR THEY CONTRIBUTED ONE BILLION DIRHAMS TO FEDER-
ATION. ALLEGEDLY 600 MILLION DIRHAMS WAS CONTRIBUTED IN
CASH AND REMAINDER SPENT FOR PROJECTS WITHIN DUBAI EMIRATE.
(KISHK'S REMARK THAT DUBAI MUST HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER
BUDGET AS RASHID'S SON HAMDAN IS MINISTER OF FINANCE WAS
MET WITH WRY REPLY THAT IN DUBAI, HAMDAN BIN RASHID IS
KNOWN AS "THE HUSBAND OF THE FINANCE MINISTRY" BECAUSE HE
IS ALWAYS THE LAST ONE TO KNOW ABOUT ITS ACTIVITIES.)
DUBAIANS ARGUE THAT ZAYID'S REQUEST THAT EACH EMIRATE CON-
TRIBUTE 50 PERCENT OF ITS INCOME TO THE FEDERAL BUDGET HAS

NEVER RECEIVED SUPREME COUNCIL OF RULERS APPROVAL. CONSTITUTION SPECIFIES ONLY THAT 10 PERCENT OF EACH EMIRATE'S INCOME BE CONTRIBUTED TO FEDERATION WHEREAS DUBAI ALREADY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTRIBUTING 25 PERCENT. (ACTUALLY CONSTITUTION HAS NO SPECIFIC PERCENTAGE.) IN RETURN DUBAI RECEIVED INADEQUATE SHARE OF FEDERAL PROJECT SPENDING. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD, IT IS ALLEGED, REFUSED TO ASSUME FUNDING FOR ELECTRICITY AND OTHER PROJECTS IN DUBAI SOLELY BECAUSE DUBAI REFUSED TO TURN OVER ITS RASHID HOSPITAL TO BE RUN (INCOMPETENTLY, IN OPINION OF MOST DUBAIANS AND MANY FOREIGN RESIDENTS) BY FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

11. ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH INDICATION THAT MORE SUCH REVELATIONS OF DUBAI GRIEVANCES WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN NEXT ISSUE OF AL-HAWADESS.

12. COMMENT: THIS IS NOW SECOND TIME IN TWO WEEKS THAT DUBAI'S DIFFERENCES WITH ABU DHABI HAVE BEEN AIRED IN THE PRESS. RASHID OBVIOUSLY INTENT UPON GETTING A LOT OFF HIS CHEST (ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT THAT MUCH OF MATERIAL IN THIS ARTICLE WAS SUPPLIED KISHK BY MAHDI TAJIR) YET AT SAME TIME TO MAKE CLEAR HIS QUARREL IS NOT WITH ZAYID NOR WITH FEDERAL UNION AS SUCH. IN ZEROING IN ON MINISTER OF PETROLEUM UTAYBA, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AHMAD BIN HAMID, AND OTHERS SURROUNDING ZAYID, HOWEVER, RASHID AND TAJIR ARE BOUND TO PERSONALIZE THESE DIFFERENCES STILL FURTHER AND THEREBY MAKE THEIR RESOLUTION MORE DIFFICULT. WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED BY SENIOR ABU DHABI ADVISER TO ZAYID THAT LATTER WAS STUNG BY FIRST RASHID PRESS INTERVIEW (REFTEL) AND ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY DISSUADED FROM GOING HIMSELF TO THE PRESS. THIS TIME IS LESS LIKELY ZAYID CAN BE PERSUADED TO REMAIN SILENT ALTHOUGH HE MIGHT AGREE TO DEFER PUBLICATION OF HIS OWN SIDE OF THE STORY UNTIL A FURTHER ATTEMPT TO PATCH THINGS UP IN PRIVATE AMONG THE RULERS HAS BEEN MADE. HOWEVER, THE DEPARTURE JUNE 19 OF SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH ON SIX WEEKS HOLIDAY ABROAD MEANS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT FULL MEETING OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL NOT LIKELY BEFORE AUGUST WHEN ALL RULERS WILL BE IN COUNTRY FOR RAMADAN. IN MEANTIME LIKELY CONTINUED APPEARANCE IN AL-HAWADEC AND OTHER ARABIC PRESS OF STORIES LIKE THIS ONE WILL INCREASE PRESSURES ON ZAYID TO RESPOND IN KIND.
DICKMAN

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